



## GRANTEE MONITORING

Grantee Name	Birthright of Alexandria
Location/Address	1114 Broadway, Alexandria MN 56308
Date and Location of Site Visit	October 24, 2017
Grantee Participants	Julie Desautels
MDH Participant(s)	Mary Ottman, Grant Manager
Grant Agreement #/PO #	<b>109491/3-39141</b>

**PURPOSE:**

In accordance with the MDH Policy 238.01 Grantee Monitoring, MDH will conduct at least one monitoring visit per grant period on all state grants of over \$50,000, and at least annual monitoring visits on grants of over \$250,000.

The purpose of the grant monitoring visit is to review and ensure progress against the grants' goals, to address any problems or issues before the end of the grant period and to build rapport between the state agency and the grantees. This visit may cover topics such as statutory compliance; challenges faced by the grantee, modifications made to the grant program, program outcomes, grantee policies and procedures, grantee governance, and training and technical assistance needs.

The findings or information obtained through this monitoring activity will be used:

- To ascertain how MDH program funds are being utilized
- To provide targeted technical assistance needs
- To improve program implementation performance
- To suggest other training needs
- In future funding decisions
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**OVERVIEW**

1. Is the Grantee's non-profit 501(c) 3 status current? **Yes**
2. Does the Grantee have a central file containing the official records for this grant agreement and/or amendment? **Yes**



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3. Where is this central file located?

**Treasurer's office and computer**

4. Who is responsible for this central file?

**Treasurer**

5. Does the central file include

- The grant proposal? **Yes**
- The award letter? **Yes**
- The signed grant agreement and any/all amendments? **Yes**
- Any/all requests and/or approvals for scope/budget changes? **Yes**
- The work plan? **Yes**
- Any/all payment requests (invoices)? **Yes**
- Any/all signed subcontracts? **Yes**
- Any/all Progress Reports? **Yes**

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Does the organization meet all reporting requirements as outlined in the grant agreement and/or amendment?

**Yes**

2. Are expenditure reports submitted timely and accurately?

**Yes**

3. Are progress reports submitted with all required information and in a timely manner?

**Yes**

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### CONTRACTUAL

1. Does the Grantee have written policies or procedures addressing use of contractors and/or subcontractors? **Yes**
2. Were any sub-contractors paid from the MDH grant required to sign a contractual agreement outlining services to be rendered, duration of engagement, and pay rate?  
**Yes**
3. Was the contractual agreement(s) reviewed and approved by MDH before implementation?  
**Yes**

### PERSONNEL POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES OF THE GRANTEE

1. Are time distribution records (e.g., time-sheets) maintained to show how employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind to, the MDH grant and who work on multiple projects/programs spend their time? **N/A**
2. Do personnel and/or payroll records show dates of hire/termination, immigration status if applicable, actual hours of time worked, leave time, federal and state programs worked on, and earning for all employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind, to the MDH grant? **N/A**
3. Does the Grantee have policies and procedures in writing regarding:
  - Payroll? **N/A**
  - Travel? **Yes**
  - Overtime? **N/A**
  - Timesheets? **N/A**
  - Taxes? **We file all required tax forms**
  - Purchasing? **Yes**
  - Compensated time off? **N/A**
4. Are employees time sheets approved? **N/A**  
By whom (what position)? **N/A**  
By the Executive Director? **N/A**
5. Does the Grantee's payroll preparation and distribution involve more than one employee?  
**N/A**
6. Does an authorized official approve all checks before being signed? **Yes**

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### PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

Please use this space to answer all questions.

#### ***Program History***

- When was your program started? Why was it started?  
**Birthright opened an office in Alexandria in 1978 to help pregnant women in need.**
- What need does your program fulfill?  
**We attempt to effect a decrease in abortions by offering alternatives to abortion; we have a center where women can receive material help; we help women mobilize their own resources and those of the community; we try to create a societal awareness of the needs of pregnant women.**
- How has the program grown or changed since its beginning?  
**We have expanded the basic concept of a pregnant woman's "needs." We used to provide only clothing, diapers, advice, and referrals. We continue to do this, but have now included a wider range of opportunities for education, expanded postpartum help, added life coaching, initiated an emergency assistance program, and are becoming more recognized in the community as a partner in removing barriers faced by this segment of the population. We are reaching out to people who do not speak English through the use of interpreters and mentors.**

#### ***Grantee's Target population***

- Who does the organization primarily serve? **Pregnant women, and women and/or families parenting infants**
- What is the program's demographic and geographic coverage? **Our services are not restricted by geographical boundaries, but typically we serve women in a seven county region of central Minnesota.**
- Review recent Demographic reporting.  
**First-time clients from July-Sept. 2017**  
**Age: 15-17 (3%); 18-19 (3%); 20-24 (27%); 25-29 (37%); 30-34 (16%); 35+ (12%), Unknown (2%)**  
**Marital Status: Married (29%); Unmarried (68%); Unknown (3%)**  
**Race: White (87%); African American (1%); Multi- (8%); Am. Indian (3%) Unknown (1%)**  
**Hispanic Ethnicity (23%); Non-Hispanic Ethnicity (77%)**  
**Child Relationship: Mother (96%); Father (1%); Grandparent/Step (3%)**

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**Pregnancy Status of Mother: 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester (3%); 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester (11%); 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester (51%) Postpartum (35%)**

### ***Leadership and Governance***

- Effective Board: How many board members currently serve, who are they?
  - a. Bob Carter—business community
  - b. Julie Desautels—Church of St. Mary
  - c. Patti Eckhoff—educational community
  - d. Tammy Lenz—Birthright executive director
  - e. Chris Wieberdink—New Covenant Church
  - f. Eileen Anderson—business community
  - g. Suzanne Sudmeier—Certified Nurse Midwife
  - h. Ashley Lenz—medical community
- How often do they meet? How are they informed of organization's progress and challenges?

**The board meets a minimum of four times a year. The board meets beyond that as necessary. The board uses a “dashboard” format to keep informed of Birthright’s needs and programming.**
- How supportive is the Board of the program? **The board is extremely supportive.**
- How is the program staffed? **Birthright is staffed by volunteers. We contract with individuals to perform some grant-related activities.**
- Who is responsible for the supervision of grant staff? **Grant staff reports to board.**
  - How are staff evaluated on their performance? **Quarterly reports at board meeting**
  - How long have PA staff been employed there? **PA staff has been at Birthright since before there was a Positive Alternative grant available.**
  - How are staff background checks done? **We do not do background checks at this point.**
  - What is your organization’s policy on complaints for staff and clients? **Any complaint is brought to the attention of the director, who then discusses serious matters with the board.**

### ***Budget***

- Does the current budget reflect your work plan activities? **Yes**
- Is the budget accurate for the project size/scope? **Yes**

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- Do you have any challenges with the budget or invoicing? **No**

### **Budget**

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- Is the budget accurate for the project size/scope? **Yes**
- Do you have any challenges with the budget or invoicing? **No**
- Has your Financial Reconciliation taken place? **Not for this grant cycle**
- If you have an elevated risk designation, and/or your Financial Reconciliation report cited any concerns, these will be discussed. **Birthright of Alexandria has a medium risk based on the financial risk assessment that was completed from the information given on the Due Diligence Form in their 2016 application.**

### **Review Work Plan including:**

#### **Partners**

- If applicable: how are people referred to the program? **Most often by word of mouth, Public Health workers refer many people to us, including other public health staff**
- Are there any barriers encountered with referral sources? **We hear quite often that people don't know what Birthright does. We are one of those groups that exist on the fringe of most people's experiences. We have been attending community meetings, such as United Way and the local Early Childhood Initiative to increase our visibility.**
- What is your most common referral source? **Family and friends, along with public health**
- Challenges with partners or specific counties? **No challenges**

#### **Work Plan**

- Review your 2016 – 19 grant application's description of the program you are asking to be funded. On your work plan note the services and activities you said you would provide and the number of clients you would serve.
- **Prepare a short summary of your current program(s) and the number of clients being served.** How does what you describe in the application compare with what you are currently providing? Have any programs and/or activities or services been added or removed? Have the number of clients being served per quarter decreased or increased since June 2016? Is there anything in particular you want to share about your current program to explain its current status?  
**Car Seats: The numbers have remained consistent, ranging from 14-19 per quarter and averaging 15.9. Anticipated 18**

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**Crib:** The numbers have remained consistent, ranging from 28-36 per quarter and averaging 32. Anticipated 37

**Layettes:** The numbers have grown, ranging from 26-50 a quarter and averaging 38. Anticipated 24

**Parent Education:** The numbers have grown, ranging from 10-63 per quarter and averaging 27. Anticipated 9

**Interpreters:** This program has grown considerably since it was introduced last year. One indication of this is that last year's Hispanic "new client" count was 3%. This year it increased to 23%. Our interpreters have significantly changed our outreach.

**Emergency Assistance (HeartBEATS):** This is a new program for us. We assisted 7 people with smaller (up to \$100) emergency needs and 5 with larger (\$100-\$800) emergency needs. Anticipated 10-12

- Do you anticipate making any changes to the 2017-18 Work Plan? If so, in what way and for what reasons? **There is a column marked "Financial Education and Assistance." I marked these numbers in a column marked "Case Management."**

**Participants:**

- What type of outreach does the organization put into action?  
**We advertise on bus benches and on a bus. We have an outreach coordinator who is working with our promotions coordinator to increase community awareness about our services, recruit volunteers, and seek financial support**
- What is working well?  
**Being visible in the community has worked very well. Taking an active role in community organizations has made a difference in how we are perceived**
- What are more the challenging aspects to finding or retaining clients?  
**If a client needs material help, we are not hard to find. What we continue to find challenging is attracting abortion-minded women. We want to reach women of all socio-economic and educational levels, not just those perceived by the community as "needing help."**

**Data:**

- How is program data collected and by whom?  
**All volunteers collect data with intake forms. Public health nurses who do safe sleep education also collect data for us. The data we collect is useful.**

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- Anything we can do to help or simplify data collection?

**Through the years the collection process has been tweaked--, your continuing patience helps a lot**

### ***Review Evaluation***

- Your 2015-16 Evaluation Report Summary will be discussed (If you were a past grantee).
- Your 2016-17 Evaluation Plan will be reviewed. Any suggestions provided in your 2015-16 Report Summary should be included in the plan, if you are continuing a similar evaluation. If you are planning a new evaluation, details will be discussed. Do you have any questions on your evaluation?

### ***Miscellaneous***

- Anything else you would like to share?
- Anything else we haven't asked?

### ***What can we do to help?***

- Trainings and Grantee meetings useful for grantee? Any topic suggestions?  
**-I know it varies by county/city, but housing is a big issue. What roles do agencies such as CEP, HUD, etc. play? I think there are other agencies as well. We need better understanding of programs like Section 8 and low-income housing.**  
**-We are totally confused by Minnesota programs and how they help families. MFIP, child care, SNAP—these are so tangled that we always just send people to social services for help. But we SHOULD have a better grasp on these programs, especially as they touch on the Necessary Services**
- Feedback or suggestions for the state?  
**We are very, very grateful for this grant and have seen how it helps a lot of women**
- Is there any way MDH can assist you to better equip your success in the Positive Alternatives Grant Program? **I am interested in hearing about how people have (in general) challenged this program at the state level. What are their objections and concerns? We can indirectly address these, if we know of them, with our partners**

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**Summary:**

Birthright of Alexandria has been a long time grantee receiving grant funding through the Positive Alternatives program since its first grant cycle in 2006 – 2008. With the help of grant funding Birthright of Alexandria has been able to greatly expand their programming to include the following grant funded programming: outreach, car seat education and distribution, case management, crib safety education and distribution, financial assistance, interpreter services, life skills education, pregnancy and parenting education, material support, nutrition support and education, and transportation assistance.

One challenge the center has had is providing services needed in the community by their clients within the guidelines/restrictions suggested by their affiliate organization. Several board members have discussed the possibility of becoming an independent center. More discussion will follow at future board meetings and with staff volunteers. At this time the center is in the beginning stages of examining the situation. Volunteer staff will keep MDH updated on decisions or progress towards a resolution to this situation.

Birthright of Alexandria is the recipient of an additional PA award for years 2 and 3 of the grant cycle. Budget revisions were discussed to incorporate funding for both years with the current budgets. Staff are beginning to add new programming of added mentoring and financial support for those clients in special need of additional assistance funded by the new award.

Currently this grantee has not had a policy on conducting background checks for volunteer staff that may work with clients or with bills, budgets or funding. Best practices for nonprofits recommend requiring background checks for all volunteer staff who may work with clients or with funding. It would be a recommendation for the board of directors to look at policy on this matter for all new volunteers.

Work plan adjustments were looked at. Staff would like to make minor changes to their work plan to better describe and account for clients served. Changes can be made to work plans and submitted for approval when needed especially when changes better reflect the work that the grantee is providing in their community.

Clients served by Birthright has been steady and in some cases increasing. Birthright of Alexandria has been a responsible grantee diligently attempting to serve their clients' needs and also makes good use of community resources for services that they can refer their clients to. This grantee has been timely in all reporting submissions and has been a pleasure to work alongside. I look forward to our continuing work for the last several years of this grant cycle.

**Date: October 26, 2017**

**Grant Manager: Mary Ottman**



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